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SUBJECT: KRG ELECTIONS: IHEC ANNOUNCES PROVISIONAL RESULTS
AND APPEALS PANEL GETS UNDERWAY

REF: A. BAGHDAD 2003

[1](#)B. BAGHDAD 2032

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Gary A. Grappo for reasons
1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Having announced last week provisional results of the Kurdistan regional elections, the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) has shifted its attention to preparing for the national elections, expected to take place in January 2009. Overall, contacts at UNAMI, diplomatic missions and Iraqi civil society, credited IHEC with a well-run election organization effort in the KRG elections. The provisional results, which closely track the preliminary results that IHEC announced July 29, confirm that Masoud Barzani easily won the Kurdistan Region's first popular election of a president, and that the coalition of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) retained the majority of seats in the Iraqi Kurdistan Parliament (IKP). The final, certified results of the KRG election will be published in late August after the Kurdistan Electoral Judicial Panel completes its review of appeals filed on the IHEC's decisions. END SUMMARY.

Provisional Results Confirm Barzani, Kurdistan List

[1](#)2. (U) At a press conference in Erbil on August 7, IHEC Commissioner Hamdia Al-Husseini reported that 1,819,652 votes had been counted in the KRG presidential elections and 1,876,196 votes had been counted in the Iraqi Kurdistan Parliamentary elections. The provisional results confirm President Masoud Barzani as the first popularly elected president of the KRG with 69.60% of the vote (Ref B). Dr.Kamal Merawdali won 25.30% of the vote, and five other candidates split the remaining five percent of the vote. (Halo Ibrahim Ahman won 3.5% of the vote. Ahmad Mohammed Rasool Nabi Safin Jaji Sheikh Mohammed won 1.04% of the vote, and Hussein Garmyani won 0.59% of the vote.)

[1](#)3. (SBU) In the race for the 111-seat Iraqi Kurdish Parliament, the Kurdistan Coalition (KDP-PUK) is likely to retain its majority, though at a significant reduction from the 104 seats it previously held. IHEC's provisional results show the KDP-PUK winning 57.37% of the vote, which is expected to result in 59 seats. Nawshirwan Mustafa's Change List (Goran) party won a surprising 23.72% of the votes, and is expected to receive 25 seats in the IKP. IHEC's provisional results also show that the Services and Reform Coalition won 12.84% of the vote, which is likely to result in 13 seats. (NOTE: Seat allocations remain estimates until the election results are certified. END NOTE.). The Islamic movement in Kurdistan gained 1.45% of the votes.

[1](#)4. (C) Eleven seats in the IKP were reserved for minority parties - five seats for Turkomen representatives, five seats for Christians, and one seat for an Armenian. IHEC provisional results will affect a handful of minority seats that are hotly contested within minority groups. Our

contacts in the minority community, and more broadly among the Kurdish opposition, complain that the Kurdish list, and in particular elements associated with the KDP, used bribery, manipulation, and intimidation in an effort to shape the electoral results. (Reported septel.)

Complaints Process

¶5. (SBU) By law, IHEC is required to implement mechanisms for receiving, reviewing and resolving complaints related to electoral events. For the KRG Elections, IHEC investigated 777 formal complaints submitted by qualified individuals and parties. Of these, UNAMI reports that IHEC determined that roughly 60 of these complaints were serious enough to materially affect the outcome of the election. After deliberation, the IHEC Board decided to exclude election results from 43 polling stations (less than one percent of the total election results, and within international best practices). The complaints were published over a three day period. Appeals could be submitted to the Kurdistan Electoral Judicial Panel for review. After this process is completed, the KRG election results will be certified and IHEC will announce the final results, probably sometime in the last week of August.

Comment

¶6. (C) At this stage, IHEC plays a critical role in

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ensuring that the results of the KRG election are accepted by the voters of the Kurdistan region -- and the citizens of Iraq. So far, the consensus is that IHEC has accomplished that task. A far more daunting set of tasks confronts IHEC, however, as it gears up to organize the January national elections. The initial challenge it faces will be implementing its ambitious Voter Registration Update (see septel.) As with the KRG elections, IHEC will need to demonstrate that it can implement the logistics for these elections and move forward with a clear, uniform set of rules that will ensure results acceptable to Iraqis as credible.
HILL